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Chapter Two. Performance and characterization

We may well be rewarded for concentrating on a performer as they *merely* turn a street corner, sit in a chair, touch a wall, move around a bedroom or carry a bunch of flowers. Fresh aspects of even familiar films emerge when we attend to gestures, postures, expressions and voice – and how they are situated (Klevan 2005: preface).

2.1 Introduction

Performance in a filmic context can be defined as ‘what the performer does in addition to the actions/functions she or he performs in the plot and the lines she or he is given to say. Performance is how the action/function is done, how the lines are said’ (Dyer 1979:151). Additionally, actors’ performances also give us access to characters’ feelings and thoughts and as such contribute to the ‘revelation of the interior states of characters’ (Murray Smith 1995: 151). Both of these definitions of performance mention actors and characters and it can be seen that performance and characterization overlap. Andrew Klevan explains this succinctly:

[O]n film, characters have no existence apart from the particular human beings on screen, and no life apart from the particular performers who incarnate them. Character and performer are inextricably intertwined; they coalesce (2005: 4).

In this chapter, I examine characterization and performance in more depth, with a focus on voice, in order to explain why it is important to investigate both in audiovisual translation.

2.2 Studying performance

2.2.1 Defining performance

From a semiotic perspective, signs of performance include facial expressions, voice, gestures, body postures and movements, items of clothing and the use of lighting (Dyer 1979:151). Props, décor and lighting have already been examined in *Chapter One*; in this chapter, therefore, the emphasis will be more on facial expressions, gestures, posture and other movements, since these constitute a semiotic system in their own right (Baldry and Thibault 2006: 2002-3).

As the meaning within a performance is conveyed through body movements and gestures (Dix 2008: 19 and Phillips 2005: 35), studying performance relies on kinesics, defined as the way communication is achieved through body language (Birdwhistell 1970). Seen from this angle, the visual focus of a scene proves very important when analysing audiovisual materials. For instance, we can focus on the gaze of actors as well as how characters look at each other or at the audience (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996: 121-2 and Baldry and Thibault 2006: 201). There is also an oral facet to performance, which is mainly conveyed through voice, e.g. intonation or a character’s pitch. Whether we are dealing with visual or aural/oral elements, it must be noted that, in the same way as there are different words at our disposal when we construct sentences, there are different ways of performing movements (Baldry and Thibault 2006). This will be given further consideration in *Chapter Four* with the

presentation of my multimodal method. Moreover, Richard Dyer (1979/1998) argues that the way we read performance signs is bound both culturally and historically. Context is therefore crucial to our understanding of a performance. This is a fascinating statement which resonates in the translation context of this study; in dubbing, *how* things are said is inevitably changed, meaning translation can be seen to have a direct impact on performance.

Dyer's seminal book *Stars* (1979/1998) studies performers as 'stars', looking more specifically at how audiences perceive films because of the 'stars' who act in them. Dyer's book has been particularly instrumental to my understanding of how performance and characterization connect and his work will be referred to in more detail in 2.3. For the time being, it is sufficient to emphasize that *Stars* is one of the few books that focuses on the perception of performances, and since its publication, the emphasis of performance analysis in Film Studies has shifted more towards 'acting' and the impact of various acting techniques (e.g. vaudeville, Stanislavsky or Method techniques). More recently, however, Andrew Klevan, in his book *Film Performance: From Achievement to Appreciation* (2005), has focused on performance as another element of a film's 'style', enabling me to establish a strong link between performance and *mise-en-scène*. Klevan's title is also indicative of an emphasis on the interpersonal function of performance, as he claims that:

the achievement of the performer and the appreciation of the viewer are united, and there is a similarity between the performer's art and the viewer's task. They mirror each other's effort (2005: 7).

In *Chapter One*, I looked at films in terms of experience. There is a similar emphasis in Klevan's work, as he advocates that we 'concentrate on individual scenes or sequences' in order to be 'responsive to their unfolding' (ibid.) and, quoting Charles Affron, to 'savor the delight of their rhythms and rhymes, the flow of their contours' (Affron 1997:7). Klevan is therefore not the only scholar to argue for a 'greater sensitivity' to film performance (2005: 15); it is also evident from the works of Lesley Stern and Georges Kouvaros (1999), Affron (1997), Perkins (1999), David Thomson (1967) and Stanley Cavell (1996). The act of describing a film becomes even more important in this context; indeed:

[D]escription is a *question* of how to bring into existence, how, in the course of analysis, to evoke for a reader that lost object [...] Ideally we would like to write in such a way as to bring the film into imaginative being for the reader, so that she views it in the process of reading. In reading she becomes a film viewer. But we would also like to offer a persuasive interpretation based on attentiveness to the object, on detailed and accurate rendition (Stern and Kouvaros 1999: 7-9).

Drawing on Stern's and Kouvaros' work, Klevan explains that one of the biggest challenges when describing films is to put into words what we are seeing on-screen, since what we 'evoke in words a medium that is primarily visual and aural, and *moving*' (Klevan 2005: 16, his emphasis). Describing scenes is a process of 'fictionalisation', and this 'fictional charge' needs to be conveyed to viewers or readers; otherwise, they will not experience the totality of the experience. This is the second main challenge when describing films.

In *Chapter One*, we saw how dissecting films may result in us overly deconstructing the whole and becoming disengaged from the material. However, if we want to argue for the complexity of films, this is a challenge that we must accept and deal with. In order to overcome the second challenge, we must try to explain what is unfolding in front of our eyes and convey the 'fictional charge' of the material if we wish to do justice to the performances,

i.e. it is 'only if we evoke the "fictional charge" of a film [that] we will be meeting the spirit in which the film performers move before us' (ibid). The saying goes: 'A picture paints a thousand words', and anyone attempting to describe scenes from audiovisual material must bear this complexity in mind when trying to translate visual elements into words. In the present book, I will provide detailed description of sequences in an attempt to capture the visual, oral and movement-based aspects of my material, all while keeping these challenges in mind. Moreover, as must be noted from the outset, there is an innate subjectivity within film description; description and interpretation are difficult to dissociate. As Klevan notes: '[T]he prose endeavours to evoke the films and interprets them at the same time' (ibid.: 105). Subjectivity is therefore inherent to film analysis and should not deter us from analysing audiovisual material in detail.

Klevan analyses sequences from ten of Hollywood's 'Golden Age' films in order to present a 'method for sustaining attention to a performance' (ibid.: 103). He considers various aspects of performance, including body posture, items of clothing, facial expressions and the use of lighting. His method 'requires that we slow down, stop, and dwell, so that we can savour the intensity of interaction, an intonation or an expression – the reverberations – and reflect [on] the resonance' (ibid). I find this feature of his work particularly inspiring, and as we shall see in *Chapter Four*, 'savouring' the text, experience and pleasure are all integral analytical parts of my own method for analysing characterization through performance.

Additional accounts of performance can be found in the field of theatre studies. David Graver (1997), for instance, writes about the actors' bodies and the manner in which they signify on stage. Graver explains that:

[T]heories of theatre commonly claim that actors exist both as characters in a drama and performers on stage. Clearly the actor's presence on stage is not unified and fixed, but can its ontological shimmer be adequately explained by a simple division between character and performer? [...] The arguments suggest that the actor pretends to be a particular character while remaining his/her real self or that the actor represents a character while presenting his/her performance. But what exactly is the distinction between artifice and reality or between presence and representation? (1997: 221).

Graver's account of performance is interesting in that it places actors' performances into a socio-historical framework and raises questions about the identity of characters, performers and actors. His perspective enables us to situate the bodies of actors at the centre of performance and consider the visual aspect of performance in more detail.

2.2.2 Bodies & performance

Milly Williamson (2005: 41), in her discussion of the sympathetic vampire, notes that an actor's body is 'a central site of signification'. She is speaking in the context of melodrama, and explains that 'the possession of a physical flaw can evoke innocence and victimhood' (ibid). Although this is a very specific context, her statement can be extrapolated to a more general view in which bodies as semiotic signs constitute very important aspects of generating meaning, even if different genres and types of films will have different ways of 'using' actors' bodies to convey specific messages.

Hence, actors can be seen to embody characters; Graver claims that, in order to do so, they use seven 'forms of corporal presence' (1997: 233) – namely, 'characters, performers, commentators, personages, members of socio-historical groups, physical flesh, and loci of private sensations' (ibid.: 222). Not all of these elements will be developed here; what interests me most is that Graver is concerned with the various ways in which actors' bodies generate meaning:

[I]n looking for the worlds in which the actor establishes a corporeal existence we are looking for more than just worlds in which the actor has meaning. We are, rather, looking for worlds in which he or she has a body. More than just an object or image, a body has interiority, exteriority, and autonomy. A body's interior hides its unseen, volitional mechanisms, the motivating forces that drive its observable behaviour. A body's exterior presents its image to the world, but this image is not self-contained. It is marked, at least in part, as consequent in appearance or activity upon the character or developments of the body's interiority. Finally, although bodies exist within particular contexts and communities, they also have a significant degree of autonomy (ibid.: 222).

This quote highlights that characters only exist because of the actors who embody them and that bodies generate meaning in complex ways. Echoing Dyer on the cultural and historical importance of performance, Graver emphasizes that an 'actor's simultaneous construction of a representational and a performing body is contextualized within cultural history' (ibid.: 225), i.e. we know actors both from their previous roles and from the 'public circulation of stories about the[m]' (ibid.: 226); for instance, those that are published in the press. The way performances are understood is therefore highly interpersonal. Crucially, then, performances are not fully realized if they do not have an audience. Graver explains that an 'audience projects upon the figure that they see [on stage] what they know (or think they know) about the life and career of the actor'. He calls this an actor's 'personage body', which is:

not the real person behind the interpreter who is behind the performance who is behind the character. Personage status is not a foundational reality but simply another way of representing oneself or, rather, a way of representing oneself within a particular distinctive domain [...] The interiority and exteriority of personage are both open to scrutiny. Depending on the material from which personage is constructed, the interior of this body can be composed of personal history, public gossip, or a performing career. The exterior of personage is composed of distinctive physical features, typical gestures of vocal tones, the marks of personal history or the ghost of past performances (ibid.: 226-7).

Graver adds that, in the case of celebrities, 'the interior of personage is assumed to be much greater and more intriguingly complex than the audience could know, and the exterior is fetishized as a means of communing vicariously with the life hidden within' (ibid.). Marilyn Monroe, whom I have previously written about (Bosseaux 2012), is a good example of the effect of a personage body, as 'one might see in' her 'body certain gestures repeated from role to role or the ghost of a particularly famous and successful former part' (Graver 1997: 226).

Dyer and Graver echo each other in their discussion of the way in which actors signify. Indeed, when writing on character construction, Dyer also points out that spectators or audiences make assumptions on characters 'beyond the definite information supplied' about them (1979: 132), relying on other sources of information. Dyer emphasizes that, due to 'star identification', the truth about characters is usually undermined by the truth about the actor

playing him/her (ibid.: 141). Likewise, Graver also makes a parallel between an actor's personal life and their acting:

One might [...] note the differences between the image of the actor projected on movie screens and the image he or she creates on stage. One might look for harmonious or jarring connections between incidents in the star's life and the incidents portrayed in the drama (1997: 226).

What this highlights is that our understanding of a performance is influenced by the context of the films, television series and documentaries we watch due to the real personalities of the actors featured in them. We can therefore rely on other pieces of information in order to fully understand the context of a performance, i.e. paratexts such as reviews, magazines and blogs, by seeing what stories are associated with actors and considering whether these impact on our conception of their personage.

Actors' bodies, their interiority and exteriority are therefore central to performance and interesting parameters of identity to consider when analysing characters' performance. As Graver puts it, an actor's corporal identity is:

linked to race, class, or gender and constructed within the socio-historical discourse of culture. This body's exterior consists of physical features deemed significant by custom and prejudice. These features might include skin colour, sex, posture, accent, dialect, gait, or hand gestures (1997: 227-8).

By putting the emphasis on actors' bodies, I want to draw attention to the complexity of performance and characterization and highlight how they are multi-layered and therefore challenging to tackle in translation. We will now consider in more detail how performance and characterization can be analysed in audiovisual materials.

2.3 Performance as characterization

Characterization – the way characters are created on-screen through actors' performance, speech, voice characteristics, facial expression, gestures, camera angles and character gaze – is a topic that has received little attention in Film Studies. Even when it has, this has mostly been in relation to the 'golden age' of Hollywood cinema, e.g. in Dyer's *Stars* (1979, re-edited in 1998), perhaps the most significant point of reference on the topic. This influential work *Stars* explores the phenomenon of stardom from sociological and semiotic perspectives, advancing that the way viewers perceive films is influenced by the stars playing roles within them.

Dyer questions the way in which stars signify their character and examines the notion and construction of *character*. He establishes a parallel between characters in fiction and in film, explaining that 'characterization in film approximates to or tries to be like the novelistic conception of character' (1979: 116). He then presents ten 'signs' that 'viewers latch on in constructing characters' (ibid.:120-32), including audience foreknowledge, names (and their connotations), character speech (both what they say and how they say it), gestures (as indications of personality and temperament), actions ('what a character does in the plot', ibid.:128), structure (of the narrative, its function and the role of the characters within it) and *mise-en-scène* (including colour, framing and the placement of actors). Although Dyer focuses specifically on stars, these 'signs' or elements can most certainly be used to analyse the way characters in audiovisual materials are constructed. In the context of translation, the

visual parameters of appearance, objective correlatives, gesture, action, structure and *mise-en-scène* will remain unchanged. However, the connotations of these semiotic signs may change from one culture to the next. Moreover, through dubbing, characters' names and speech will vary along with the audience's foreknowledge of the actors, the actors' 'personage bod[ies]' and the themes and associations of the audiovisual material itself. As such, it is worth wondering what happens to the message in its entirety once the material is translated, for even though the gestures, actions and *mise-en-scène* remain intact, the screening context is different.

Considering audience foreknowledge and the possible associations viewers may have also brings to light the issue of intertextuality. According to Fiske:

The theory of intertextuality proposes that any one text is necessarily read in relationship to others and that a range of textual knowledges is brought to bear upon it [...] Intertextual knowledges pre-orient the reader to exploit television's Polysemy by activating the text in certain ways, that is, by making some meanings rather than others (1987: 108).

In an article on the American TV series *Xena: Warrior Princess* (Syfy 1995-2001), Sarah Gwenllian-Jones (2003: 186) points to the series' references to other texts and explains that 'intertextual references weave multiple exterior meanings of the fabric of a single text'. This is important for my research given the claims that viewers of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are regularly invited to draw on their knowledge of cultural aspects – and more particularly their knowledge of specific genres, e.g. musicals – in order to understand the intertextual references of the series (*Chapter Six*). Stafford (2007: 83) also emphasizes that our understanding of a film presupposes knowledge of other films, while Lemke (1985) goes even further in considering a broader sense for intertextuality when he advances that films generate meaning in relation to other 'texts' such as TV programmes or books. All in all, this perspective on intertextuality as well as the various elements presented in *Chapter One* reinforces the notion that meaning is a multi-layered process and that the complex fabric of visual texts makes film texts challenging to read even before we start thinking about the translation process.

Returning to the ways in which characters generate meaning, one important parameter to take into consideration is body language. Proxemics are essential to understanding characters' feelings and their relationships with other actors or characters. If, for instance, two characters are sitting close to one another on a sofa, this will convey something intimate about their relationship. However, if one of them is situated on the edge of the frame while talking to someone standing on the opposite side, it will most likely mean that they are not close or that they may be experiencing problems. This is a very important aspect to consider: it is not only the dialogue but also the visual clues that tell us about characterization and relationships. In addition to this, different types of shots will also communicate how characters may feel towards one another: when two actors are having a conversation but are not framed together in a two-shot, for instance, it normally shows that they are in opposition to one another or that they are not united.

Therefore, every gesture is important; 'legs and feet casually kick[ing] up from the knee' (Klevan 2005: 53) when a girl is on the phone with a friend talking about a boy that she may like, or a man 'looking downwards while brushing some cigarette ash from his jacket' (Smith 2007: 220) as he tells a woman how he feels about her. As mentioned previously, characterization also refers to the interiority of characters, and visual elements help us understand the inner lives of the protagonists whom we are watching interact. Klevan

illustrates this process when commenting on the specific physical placement of actors in scenes. He describes a scene in which a man, a husband/father, is not taken seriously by the rest of the family and is placed in the background of the scene. Klevan explains that 'the performer need not openly acknowledge his *position*; he remains appropriately subdued, and maintains his mild-mannered persona, but the film does not subdue the significance of his exclusion' (2005: 53). Words and visuals therefore work together to convey meaning and audiences will rely on both to get a comprehensive vision of the message. I have mentioned previously that dialogue has been neglected in Film Studies, with non-verbal elements considered to be more significant. In melodrama, for instance, Peter Brooks explains that words:

however transparent as vehicles for the expression of basic relations and verities, appear to be not wholly adequate to the representation of meanings, and the melodramatic message must be formulated through other registers of the sign (1995: 56).

Therefore, extreme physical conditions such as 'mutedness', 'blindness' and 'paralysis' will be used instead of words – or in addition to them, in the case of the latter two – to 'represent extreme moral and emotional conditions' (ibid). There is an interesting contrast between analyses in AVT studies, which have significantly overemphasized words, and Film Studies, which have placed the emphasis on non-verbal elements. My work should therefore be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between these two fields, as although I shall still take linguistic elements into consideration, I will primarily highlight the importance of non-verbal elements in dubbing.

It can be seen that characterization and performance are intrinsically linked, a fact Klevan makes explicit when he explains that:

attending to the moment-by-moment movement of performers also enhances our understanding of film characterization. It encourages us to a character's physical and aural detail and reminds us, because we are prone to forget in our literary moods, of their ontological particularity in the medium of film. A living human being embodies a film character (2005:7).

Since actors embody and perform characters, we cannot talk about characterization without reference to actors' performances. My claim in this book is that translation impacts on characterization and further situates performance as a key component of 'film style' (Klevan, 2005). I follow Klevan's method, as presented in 2.2.1, focusing on individual scenes being 'responsive to their unfolding' (2005: 7). In his interrogation of the connection between actors and characters, Klevan investigates performers':

position and perspective (the relationship of the performer to the camera, and their position within the shot), place (the relationship of the performer to location, décor, furniture, and objects); and plot (the relationship of the performer to narrative developments) (2005: preface).

For instance, when dealing with position and perspective, Klevan analyses Charlie Chaplin's specific performance in the last sequence of the film *City of Lights* (Charles Chaplin 1931), which is marked by the themes of blindness and sight. In this final sequence, Chaplin and the (formerly blind) flower woman (Virginia Cherrill) are about to be reunited upon his return from prison. When describing the scene, Klevan takes into consideration various aspects of *mise-en-scène*: the different types of shots (close-up, medium shot, over-the-shoulder shots), the framing, the movement of the camera and the actors' gestures and facial expressions:

[T]he turn of his [Chaplin's] head towards the window, and towards her, is now charged, and the relationship between performer and camera refines the theme of blindness and sight: for example, turning to see (for Charlie), coming to see (for the flower woman) and preparing to see (for the viewer). The two performers are now brought closer and closer together, in deliberate and careful stages (2005: 23).

This method of description brings to light the details of *mise-en-scène* and performance that must be taken into consideration when analysing scenes in both original and translated material. The visuals richly convey the film's theme through elements of *mise-en-scène*, e.g. body gestures and their intensity, as well as direction and pace. Body language (proxemics and kinesics) is an important parameter when it comes to understanding characters; visual clues, not just dialogue, tell us about characterization and character relationships. As *City of Lights* is a silent film, there is no mention of voice or sound in Klevan's account. However, voice and dialogue are important parts of *mise-en-scène*, even if they have been under-represented in Film Studies. For instance, Susan Smith (2007) demonstrates the importance of delivery when discussing Charles Jourdan's vocal style in *Gigi* (1958). She explains that his 'groping delivery of the word "But... But..." appears like an attempt to console himself as he begins to contemplate the advantages arising from a different, more mature Gigi' (2007: 188). Dialogue and visuals work together to create a polysemiotic whole, which may be altered depending on translation choices and choice of voices. As we shall soon see, voice covers linguistic as well as paralinguistic elements such as vocal register, timbre, tempo and volume. Although Klevan mentions vocal manner, the tone of words (2005: 33-35, 76) and the importance of using special/repetitive vocabulary (*ibid.*: 34-35, 28), these references to actors' voices are limited in comparison to other criteria such as camera movement or types of shot. In the next section, I consider voice in more detail since this is central to performance and to my study of dubbing.

2.4 Voice

This section reviews different accounts of voice analysis with the aim of demonstrating that voice is integral to an individual's or character's identity. Voice has been studied from various angles with an emphasis on psychological and philosophical considerations. For instance, philosopher Malden Dolar (2006) argues there are three ways of understanding voice: first, as 'a vehicle of meaning', secondly as 'a source of aesthetic admiration' (2006: 4) and thirdly 'as an object that can be seen as the lever of thought' (back cover). Dolar investigates the uses of voices from different points of view, including linguistics, metaphysics, physics, psychoanalysis, ethics and politics. As such, his work has been very influential to my understanding of what voice is and what it represents. My discussion will also rely on works from Film Studies as well as Sound Studies to emphasize the materiality of voices, explore the different types of voices relevant to my work (e.g. voice as an organ, voice as a presence, etc.) and claim that voice is an integral part of identity paving the way for more consideration of the choice of voices in dubbing.

2.4.1 Voice as identity

When air travels to our lungs we are given a voice that defines who we are. Indeed, according to Dolar:

We can almost unfailingly identify a person by the voice, the particular individual timbre, resonance, pitch, cadence, melody, the peculiar way of pronouncing certain sounds. The voice is like a fingerprint, instantly recognisable and identifiable (2006: 22).

Even though the status of voice and identity has scarcely been studied in Film Studies, studies in the field of neuroscience have shown that 'faces and voices are rich in information on a person's identity (i.e. idiosyncratic features, such as gender, age and body size, that lead to unique identity) and affective state (e.g. emotional, motivation)' (Campanella and Belin 2007: 535). The authors review studies of 'face-voice multimodal integration with a focus on affective perception and person identification' (ibid.) and provide evidence that voice is part of our identity since it 'carries useful indexical cues allowing information to be derived on a person's unique physical features, such as gender, age and body size' (ibid.: 538).

Further evidence of voice as identity can be found in literature presenting advances in synthetic speech. More and more people with speech disorders are being given the opportunity to have their own unique voice, as opposed to one standard synthetic voice, and their reactions to this change in their lives provide valuable testimonies linking voice to identity. For instance, Alix Spiegel, a journalist and science correspondent for National Public Radio (NPR), explains that 'when a person speaks, two things are happening. First, the source of speech comes from the voice box, which vibrates to produce sound. Then, the mouth shapes those sounds into speech' (2013: online). However, those suffering from speech disorders are not able to transition from the first step to the second, and speech scientists have been working to find a solution to this problem. Spiegel interviews Dr Ruta Patel, a speech scientist at Northeastern University, about her work on synthetic speech. Patel explains that even for 'people with speech disorders', the 'source' of the sound, i.e. their voice, is actually 'preserved' and that this is 'where the melody is – [that's] where someone's identity is, in terms of their vocal identity' (ibid). Although synthetic speech systems have existed for many years, there is only a limited number of voices available. In addition, some users prefer not to use them as they do not feel that the voice(s) represent them (ibid). In order to create more personalized voices, Patel has been working with children with speech disorders to '(re)construct' their voices. The process is simple: she records them making an 'ahhhhh' sound from which, by means of a computer program, she can 'determine their pitch, the loudness, the breathiness of their voice [and] the changes in clarity' (ibid). After doing this, she uses 'a recording of the voice of what she calls a "healthy donor" – for example, the voice of a child who is roughly the same age as the child she's trying to help – and gets them to say a large number of words' (ibid). This enables her to get 'samples' of the sounds they produce when they talk. She then combines that voice with the pitch, breathiness and other characteristics of the child with the speech disorder. The article focuses on the case of a teenage girl for whom Patel constructed a personalized voice. Spiegel interviews the girl along with her mother, who had never heard her daughter's voice until Patel created one for her. The article reports on the emotions the mother and daughter experience upon hearing the (re)constructed voice; the mother is moved to tears and plainly states: 'You need a voice' (ibid). Her words emphasize how important having a voice is to her

daughter's identity – without the voice, something had been missing; with the voice, the mother has her daughter back, so to speak.

Voice can therefore be seen as an attribute of someone's personality, and since dubbing changes an actor's voice, it is worth considering what happens to the identity of characters in translation – specifically in dubbed versions. The previous paragraph made reference to voice descriptors such as 'pitch' and 'breathiness', which will be explored further in the next section.

2.4.2 Describing voice(s)

According to Dolar, we are 'aware of the voice' through accent, intonation (the melody of speech) and timbre:

[F]or the particular tone of a voice, its particular melody and modulation, its cadence and inflection, can decide the meaning. Intonation can turn the meaning of a sentence upside down. It can transform it into its opposite. A slight note of irony, and a serious meaning comes tumbling down; a note of distress, and the joke will backfire (2006: 21).

These parameters therefore need to be taken into consideration when describing voices. It is fair to say, however, that voice studies remains a rather under-researched field within Film Studies. Major studies on voice started in the 1980s within a psychoanalytical framework, a prominent example being Chion's *The Voice in Cinema* (1982, translated into English in 1999). Chion examines the power of the human voice and 'the special relationships that inhere between the voice and the cinematic image' (1999: xi). Interestingly, most of the work done on the cinematic voice has been gender-based and 'concerned with the difficulties associated with the woman's attempt to speak in mainstream film', with the 'notable exception of Maria DiBattista's book *Fast Talking Dames* (2001)' (Smith 2007: 196). It has been said that women in film function as a fetish in Hollywood cinema, as 'Hollywood requires the female voice to assume similar responsibilities to those it confers upon the female body' (Kaja Silverman 1988: 38-9). Breaking away from the gender-based or psychological angles, recent studies on voice have focused more on practical aspects using detailed film analysis. For instance, Susan Smith (2007) is interested in 'vocal release' – moments when the actors convey a particular feeling – and offers a close reading of actors' vocal responses examined in parallel with the text's visual images. Smith considers the male cinematic voice and focuses on male characters' interiority, an interesting turning point given that interiority had previously been synonymous with femininity in work from scholars like Silverman (1988). In particular, Smith looks at 'the creative possibilities and effects that may arise in those cases where the male's struggle to speak manifests itself in the form of some quite literal impairment to his voice' (2007: 198). I will return to Smith's work on voice and vocal release in 2.4.4, as this has been particularly influential for the purposes of my book. First, however, let me define voice further.

What characters say and how they say it is a dimension of performance that can broadly be described as 'voice quality', usually defined as 'the permanently present, background, person-identifying feature of speech' (Crystal 1991: 376). From a linguistic perspective, voice quality can be described in terms of 'tempo', the rate at which we speak; 'pitch', the musical note of a voice; and 'volume' or 'placement', the location of voice in the body. Voices can also be described more 'impressionistically', using affective terms such as 'sad', 'jovial' or

‘cheerful’, i.e. a person or a character with a high-pitched voice could be described as anxious or excited. Klevan, for instance, describes Irene Dunne’s voice using terms such as ‘breathy’ and ‘slightly creaky’ (2005:33-4); she is ‘gleeful, naughty, mocking’ (2005: 34). In a similar fashion, Susan Smith (2007) writes about ‘gentle’ rhythms, ‘elegiac’ tones and ‘romantic’ or ‘nurturing’ qualities of voices. ‘Impressionistic’ adjectives can be used alongside what could be called a more objective set of vocabulary to describe the actual sound, i.e., ‘high’ and ‘breathy’ in Klevan’s example.

In order to describe voices, I have relied in particular on the work of Theo Van Leeuwen (1999), who has developed a semiotics of sound in his book *Speech, Music, Sound* by focusing on what sounds communicate in different contexts and material. Van Leeuwen uses a vast range of material: films, classical music, television series and popular music. What I found particularly useful in his work was his discussion of the ‘semiotics of voice quality and timbre’, the distinctive quality or property of a complex sound (or tone) from the point of view of what he calls ‘experiential meaning potential’ (ibid: 140). In other words, drawing from Van Leeuwen’s work, we can claim that sounds (including voices) can be used to generate meaning and consequently establish relations between characters and the audience.

Van Leeuwen explains that sounds have emotive and expressive qualities (ibid: 128): sounds ‘express’, ‘represent’ and ‘affect us’. For instance, the way a voice is used can communicate distance or intimacy between actors or characters or between characters and audiences. Intimacy is usually conveyed by a soft whispering voice, while at the other end of the spectrum, loudness will express distance between characters; the louder the voice, the more distance we can assume there to be. Audiences can therefore perceive a personal, formal or public relationship between characters based not only on the way they use their voices, but also the words used and the visual information.

Various modifiers can be used to describe voices, i.e. the impressionistic or affective adjectives mentioned and used by Klevan and Smith. Voices can be described as, for instance, high/low, soft/loud, tense/lax or breathy. However, ‘sound qualities are not pairs of binary opposites but *graded* phenomena’ (ibid: 130). Voices are not merely high or low; they can range from maximally low to maximally high. Moreover, the ‘meanings of these sound qualities are also graded’ (ibid). Van Leeuwen further emphasizes that there are problems linked to the way we talk about these meanings. The first problem is that adjectives are used to qualify voices and ‘the same component of sound quality may attract many different adjectives’ (ibid). For instance, a ‘tense’ voice may be called ‘metallic’, ‘sharp’, ‘clear’, ‘piercing’ or ‘strident’, depending on the commentator. Secondly, and similarly to how the activity of describing and interpreting a film cannot be fully separated, the ‘descriptive and evaluative’ often mix when it comes to describing voices or sounds. There are associations or connotations attached to sounds; for instance, it is generally seen as ‘good’ for a voice to be ‘bright’ and ‘clear’ (ibid). However, the adjective used is context-dependent and it may be that using a clear or loud voice is not appropriate, e.g. in an intimate context.

Van Leeuwen therefore establishes a ‘social semiotics of sound quality’ (ibid.) in which context must be taken into consideration before any interpretations are made; this is something I shall also bear in mind when analysing my own material. It may also be an opportune moment to emphasize that using impressionistic adjectives is a subjective endeavour. Some academics have found this problematic, e.g. Shingler (2007: online), who notes that there is a need to develop a more precise and shared set of terms and concepts for analysing and describing speaking voices in order to avoid being subjective. I do not,

however, view such a development to be necessary, having found using descriptive and impressionistic vocabulary in tandem with one another to be a useful tool in my attempt to describe voices. Douglas Pye's point of view has also provided reassurance in this endeavour:

In our experience of the dramatic arts we often need to speak not just of the story, the characters, or what a work signifies, but about the attitudes, feelings and values with which it is imbued. Part of the problem for criticism is that such things are difficult to pin down. What we are trying to describe or evoke can feel almost intangible, more like a gravitational field the work generates than an aspect of the work itself. Language tends to reflect this difficulty: the words we use most commonly to evoke these phenomena (atmosphere, mood, tone itself) in themselves suggest how elusive they seem. Correspondingly, responses to tone can feel subjective, as though its intangibility left us floundering in personal response in comparison to discussion of other, somehow more substantive, dimensions of meaning. Yet experiences of tone, in film as in language, are real enough to shape our understanding profoundly, while the inherently social nature of language and movies means that, however difficult we may find it to articulate them, these are not experiences that confine us in our own subjectivity: more often than not our grasp of tone is shared to a significant extent by others (Pye 2007: 74).

Describing voices, then, much like describing films, proves itself to be a challenging task because of interpretation and subjectivity. An additional source of difficulty is that, according to Dolar, we are not trained to hear voices. He points out that:

when we listen to someone speak, we may at first be very much aware of his or her voice and its particular qualities, its color and accent, but soon we accommodate to it and concentrate only on the meaning that it conveys [...] The voice is the instrument and the meaning is the goal (ibid.: 15).

In my attempt to create a model to analyse performance in audiovisual products, I have trained myself to listen and describe voice by reading material on vocal training and even taking part in a voice-over training course. By doing so, I have gained the necessary expertise to listen, savour and analyse sound events. Dolar also explains that there is an underlying belief that 'voice should not stray away from words which endow it with sense; as soon as it departs from its textual anchorage, the voice become senseless and threatening' (ibid. 43). In other words, 'usually one hears the meaning and overhears the voice, one "doesn't hear [the voice] well" because it is covered by meaning' (2006: 4). My work places much emphasis on paralinguistics, as I argue that there has been an overemphasis on linguistics in Audiovisual Translation studies. I am curious to see what happens if we concentrate not only on linguistic meaning but also listen to the words: their sounds, tone, accents or melodies. Bearing in mind the inherent difficulties when describing and analysing voices, I have tried to go beyond words to hear the voices of the actors. The method introduced in *Chapter Four* certainly focuses on achieving this. Moreover, since singing 'brings the voice energetically to the forefront, on purpose, at the expense of meaning' (Dolar 2006: 30), I will consider both spoken and sung words in my analysis.

Finally, Van Leeuwen claims that sounds convey emotions and feelings, and in order to develop his 'social semiotics of sounds', he 'go[es] beyond the adjectives themselves and consider[s] what the sounds actually are' and 'how they are actually materially produced, and with what range of meanings and values they can therefore potentially become associated' (ibid.: 130). This proves particularly significant to my research. I will devote more space in

Chapter Four to Van Leeuwen's work on describing physical voices, where I will examine key sound qualities that can be used to analyse performance and characterization in original and dubbed products. In the following section, I continue my overview of how voice has been described in the specific context of film analysis.

2.4.3 Analysing voice in films

In film analysis, the way Klevan approaches scenes – i.e. with reference to voice – is particularly interesting from a translation point of view, since in dubbed versions *what* is said and *how* it is said will be changed. Moreover, as we shall see, it is not only about 'voice' and 'vocabulary' but also how the various elements of *mise-en-scène* and performance interact and combine to make meaning. Let us consider, for instance, four short sequences initially analysed by Klevan (2005).

The first one is from *Sons of the Desert* (William A. Seiter 1933), starring Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy. In this film, Stan and Ollie lie to their wives so that they can go to the 'Sons of the Desert' convention. Ollie pretends to be ill and a doctor prescribes a cruise to Hawaii. The boat on which they were supposed to be travelling sinks and so Ollie and Stan have to face their wives and tell the truth. Klevan analyses a sequence in which Ollie and Stan talk about the whereabouts of Ollie's wife:

Stan and Ollie sit down at the table, on which Ollie taps his fingers with impatience and anxiety. He taps out a basic rhythm, and an apparently peripheral and unconnected action – Stan placing his hat on the table – is perfectly timed to cause the sound that produces the final beat. Inquiring about his wife, Ollie asks 'I wonder where she is?' and Stan replies, 'Maybe she went out.' Ollie replies with exasperation, 'I know she went out, but what I'd like to know is, where did she *went*?' While chastising Stan for the obvious Ollie makes a glaring grammatical mistake, but this itself is too conspicuous to adequately account for the humor. 'Go' may be the correct usage, but 'went' is more appropriate to the rhythm of his speech – and to their exchange: it completes the repetition of 'went' ('Maybe she *went* out', 'I know she *went* out', 'where did she *went*'), and cannot avoid crowning the welter of 'w's ('wonder', 'where', 'went', 'know', and 'where'). As Hardy vocally accentuates the final 'went', he also nods his head and jabs his finger, enhancing and justifying the fluency of his rhythm while further impressing his clumsiness (2005:28).

As we can see from this extended description, Klevan discusses the actors' performance through their use of humour, repetitive vocabulary, manner of expression and rhythm. His explanation also includes a description of the actors' gestures and expressions to show how distance is negotiated in the scene. Visual and oral elements are both examined, as these combine to generate meaning and contribute to the actors' performance. If we were to analyse this scene in its dubbed version, the major divergence from this description of the original would be in terms of the oral dimension: what the new voices sound like and how the dialogue has been translated. Furthermore, we would have to establish whether the combination of translated oral elements and visuals convey similar meanings to the target language audiences.

Another example worth considering is a scene from *The Awful Truth* (Leo McCarey 1937), a movie telling the story of a couple going through a divorce, Lucy and Jerry Warriner (Irene Dunne and Cary Grant), each of whom decides to sabotage the other's plans to remarry. Klevan

describes the way Irene Dunne utters her lines as she comments on the faulty door separating her bedroom from that of her soon-to-be ex-husband:

Her words fall gently and quietly, to almost a murmur, and this undemonstrative address gives room for the ambiguity to breathe. Indeed, Irene Dunne's voice *is* breathy, and slightly creaky, as if it were being gently stretched by the wind (her voice quietly quivering in the draught, perhaps, which drifts through the bedrooms on this windy night). It makes her sound dreamily faraway- nearly lost yet lulling (2005: 33-4).

As one can see, Klevan comments not only on what she says but *how* she says it – her vocal delivery – and how this fits in with the other elements of the scene. By drawing a parallel between her voice and the sound of the wind, we can see how the oral elements (both human and natural sounds) combine to make meaning. And if we were to study a dubbed version of this scene, we would have to consider how the individual elements of the performance have been negotiated in translation and what the effect is on the target language audience.

Klevan also analyses another scene in which Jerry and Lucy's lines provide interesting material for a performance analysis. The dialogue is as follows:

Lucy: Well, I mean, if you didn't feel the way you feel, things wouldn't be the way they are, would they?

Jerry: But things are the way you made them.

Lucy: Oh no. They're the way you think I made them. I didn't make them that way at all. Things are just the same as they always were, only you're just the same, too, so I guess things will never be the same again.

[And a little later...]

Jerry: You're wrong about things being different because they are not the same. Things are different, except in a different way. You're still the same, only I've been a fool. Well, I'm not now. So, as long as I'm different, don't you think things could be the same again? Only a little different (2005: 34).

What is interesting in this sequence is that Jerry and Lucy both repeatedly use the same words, i.e. 'goodnight', 'same', and 'different', albeit to mean different things:

[T]he repeat of identical words ('goodnight', 'same', and 'different'), each time variously moulded, sustains the tenor of suggestiveness (Dunne conducts her vocal variations exquisitely with flitting eyelids and floating eyebrows). It also gives coherence and consistency to the style of the performances (and the sequence). The use of 'same' and 'different' is necessary for the characters' covert negotiation, but it is also an analogy for their style of performance: different inflections are given to the same words rather than delivering distinctly different words (*ibid.*: 34-35).

Everything in this scene is important: the words, their delivery, the facial expressions, the make-up and the positioning of the actors in separate but conjoined rooms. All of these elements combine to create the performances, and if this scene were to be dubbed, attention would need to be paid to each of them – including the specific words as well as the way they are pronounced – so that the 'tenor of suggestiveness', or feel, is maintained in the target language versions.

Finally, when considering performance in terms of plot and the 'relationship of the performer

to narrative developments' (2005: preface), Klevan writes about Joan Bennett's performance in Fritz Lang's *Secret Beyond the Door* (1948), a film telling the story of a woman married to a man with an emotional disorder. Although the plot of the film 'could be regarded as obvious, crude and even banal' (2005: 73), this is not the case with Bennett's performance, which Klevan describes in the following terms:

During threatening moments, as she waits to discover the secret beyond the door, Bennett does not simply collapse her internal feelings into sufferings or distress. Her vocal delivery is deep and breathy, rounded and smooth, and never high-pitched. Sensuously rhythmic, it modulates, caresses and nurtures even her most anxious thoughts. She contains the turbulence as if relishing her passion on the verge of release. The voiceover allows her to keep thoughts courteously to herself while she impolitely whispers: eagerly murmuring, illicitly, close to the viewer's ear (2005: 76).

Klevan's description or interpretation puts the emphasis on the musicality of Bennett's vocal delivery, highlighting her pace, timbre and pitch, as well as how her voice manages to convey a range of feelings. These paralinguistic parameters, which are so closely linked with emotional states (see, for example, the theoretical work devised by Juslin and Sloboda 2001), supplement the given dialogue and become a signifying agent of meaning. Their inclusion is integral and interactive. This description shows once again that, when studying a sequence, various elements combine to generate meaning and that singling out vocabulary along, as has been done in many AVT studies, does not do justice to the complexity of the multimodal audiovisual message.

When analysing scenes, then, every physical and oral element matters. Movements may often be given priority in Film Studies due to their visual immediacy, but both audio and visual movements need to be recognized. From a translation perspective, it is very important to bear the nature of the dialogue in mind when creating dubbed versions, as well as the vocal delivery attached to the words. Of course, since languages work differently and different types of voices will have different connotations, consistent delivery across cultures will not always be possible. My point, however, is not to advocate perfect equivalence; rather, I am trying to deepen awareness regarding the way audiovisual materials generate meaning and the complexity of the dubbing process.

Although Klevan does make reference to vocabulary and tone in the above examples, it is fair to say that he seldom does so in the rest of his book. However, his approach to scenes does mention voice, and his work is particularly pertinent for interrogating the effect of translation on films and other audiovisual material. Klevan's work highlights how the various elements of performance interact to generate meaning, and his attentive descriptions, combining the visual and the oral, have greatly informed my work. My multimodal analysis will focus on the vocabulary used in tandem with the actors' style of performance, with a particular emphasis on vocal delivery; this is because voice itself (incorporating vocal tone, timbre, dynamic and pace) and what is said will both change in dubbing, which will have a potential, perhaps notable impact on characterization.

It is also important to bear the subjectivity of interpretations in mind when analysing voices. Different conclusions may be reached depending on who is doing the analysis. When Smith (2007) analyses Spencer Tracy's performance in *Father of the Bride* (1950), she focuses on his vocal delivery, the quality of his voice and the vocabulary he uses when talking about his soon-to-be married daughter. Smith quotes – and challenges – James Naremore (1993: 97),

who had spoken of a father's opposition to his daughter's wedding in Freudian terms:

A Freudian reading of the kind alluded by Naremore might, of course, construe Stanley's denial of Kay's womanhood here as a sign of possessiveness born out of a reluctance to admit to this daughter's grown-up sexuality and attractiveness to other men. Yet the very measured, thoughtful, understated nature of Tracy's vocal delivery does much to impart a maturity of reflection and a sense of integrity and dignity with regard to his character's feelings for Kay that seem ill catered for by readings based on the idea of the unruly, impassioned paternal jealousy (2007: 173).

Whether one agrees or disagrees with these two interpretations will depend on how one approaches the material. I find Smith's alternative reading more pertinent, particularly as it demonstrates that incorporating an analysis of an actor's voicework and tone can throw a very different light on the material. Once again, we are shown that, if we wish to get the full picture, various components or parameters need to be taken into consideration when analysing performance. Like Klevan, my research argues for a 'greater sensitivity' to film performance (2005: 15), an angle also found in the works of film scholars such as Smith (2007), whose fascinating work on moments of 'vocal release' is examined next.

2.4.4 Vocal release

Smith focuses on the 'cinematic contribution' of voices and their sung, spoken, verbal and non-verbal aspects (2007: 164). Acknowledging 'the capacity of the human voice to bring a quality of feeling and texture of meaning to the medium of film that [it] may not be possible to convey through the visuals alone' (ibid.), Smith sets out to examine how an 'actor's voice actually sounds in the precise context of a particular film and the richly varied, often highly subtle ways in which its distinctive characteristics may be used to shape the poetics of the text in question' (ibid.). She offers a close reading of actors' vocal responses ('diegetic vocal releases', 2007: 167), which she examines in parallel with the text's visual images in order to demonstrate what films set out to communicate. She focuses on moments of 'vocal release'; verbal disclosures or vocal/verbal outbursts, moments when the actors convey a particular feeling through their voices – feelings which are in line with the overall storyline.

Smith describes at length voices in sequences from Hollywood films: their tone, pitch, timbre, what these voices convey and how they convey various feelings. For instance, she looks at the way female and male actors' voices are used to convey particular emotions and symbolize various states. She specifically investigates male anxiety and frustrations linked to the growing up of the respective daughter characters in both *Father of the Bride* (1950) and *Gigi* (1958)¹, as well as Pam Greer's maternal and nurturing voice in *Random Harvest* (Mervyn Le Roy, 1942) when she helps Smith (Ronald Colman) to heal from the trauma of the war (2007: 210-224).

When discussing *Love Me or Leave Me* (Charles Vidor 1955), Smith explains that when Ruth Etting (Doris Day) sings to Johnny Alderman (Cameron Mitchell), her 'would-be-lover', it is:

the stark contrast between the overall banality of the mise-en-scène and the rich texture of Day's singing voice that ultimately makes this moment so profoundly moving: the drab

¹ This work also links in with her previous work on musicals (2006), e.g. she argues that songs and music in the musical *Gigi* are used to convey deeper feelings of male anxiety than in *Father of the Bride*.

emptiness of the recording studio comes to embody a quality of emotional barrenness and desolation to Ruth's life that her singing now begins to challenge and defy (2007: 163).

Smith's description highlights the importance of examining visual and aural elements in unison, and we are reminded once again that it is the way voice combines with *mise-en-scène* that gives full meaning to the performance.

In terms of examples of specific voicework, Smith studies moments of 'vocal release' in, for example, *Mr Smith Goes to Washington* (Frank Capra 1939), explaining how the actor James Stewart's 'habit of speaking in a slow, stumbling, hesitant way had certainly become a recognized part of his performance repertoire by this time' (2007: 199). By casting Stewart instead of Gary Cooper, 'Capra was able to exploit a feeling of vulnerability arising out of the tremulous nature of this actor's voice and the hesitant manner of his phrasing' (*ibid.*: 199). This statement resonates with Graver's and Dyer's works on celebrities mentioned previously; audiences, including casting directors, construct ideas of actors in light of the information that they have on them. By reminding us how difficult it is to separate actors' real personas from the characters they play on-screen, Smith sheds a little more light on the various layers of characterization present in audiovisual materials and the challenges brought about by translation.

Smith emphasizes that James Stewart received medical help to achieve an optimum level of 'hoarseness' in his voice. For Smith, voice is to be understood not only as 'vocal performance', but also in its figurative sense, as a medium of expression:

[I]n feeding into the whole suspense surrounding whether Jefferson Smith will manage to hold out for long enough to be able to clear his name, [it] is something that finds its most extreme form of realization in the losing sequence where Stewart's character's finds himself on the verge of both vocal and physical collapse (2007: 199-200).

His voice is raw, deprived of its 'broader tonal range and colouring'. In order to explain its effect, Smith draws on Roland Barthes' concept of the grain of voice. For Barthes, the grain of voice is 'the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue' (1977: 182); it is 'the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs' (Barthes 1977: 188). Van Leeuwen notes that post-structuralist authors such as Barthes are known for having 'reintroduced the materiality of the sign' and reinstated 'the affective dimensions of language and music' (1999: 128), and this is precisely what happens when we listen to voices: the grain affects us as listeners, being 'something that is brought to your ears in one and the same movement from deep down in the cavities, the muscles, the membranes and the cartilages' (Barthes 1977: 179).

Barthes developed this concept of the grain of the voice in relation to vocal music and 'made a crucial distinction between voices that have "grain" and those that do not in order to understand the pleasures of listening to voices in which traces of the performer's body can be heard, inscribing a certain texture or even roughness to the voice' (Shingler 2007: online). It is the 'precise space (genre) of the encounter between a language and a voice' (1977: 181). To listen to the 'grain' is to listen to our 'relation with the body of the man or the woman singing or playing and that relation is erotic' (1977: 188). We are reminded that physical and verbal elements combine to generate meaning and that voice is, as Dolar claims, central to our understanding of identity.

Drawing on Barthes, Smith explains that voice is the 'ultimate site of intersection and negotiation between the body and language' (2007: 205). Therefore:

[...] in the physical effort and struggle that Stewart's rasping, forced-through-the-throat style of delivery conveys, one could argue that much of the significance of the actor's performance lies in his ability to restore a sense of the *bodily* origins and integrity of the voice to the *discursive* realm of the senate chamber as Jeff proceeds to expose a congressman so habituated to using his own voice in the service of linguistic manipulation and cover-up to a more emotionally direct, visceral way of speaking and feeling (2007: 205).

Smith describes Stewart's voice as 'an aural equivalent of sand paper', one which 'scratches and scrapes away Paine's outer armour' (ibid). By bringing to light the 'visceral texture and bodily grain of voice' (ibid.), Smith reminds us of the power of sounds and associations, which has encouraged me to think more deeply about what happens to a voice and its 'grain' in dubbing.

Indeed, a link to dubbing can easily be made when Smith comments on the musicality and masculinity of Robert Donnat's speaking voice in *Goodbye, Mr Chips* (Sam Wood 1939). She writes that 'the gentle rise and fall in pitch as he moves effortlessly and without a pause through his sentences help[s] to confirm the emergence of a much more emotionally assured, revitalised form of masculinity' (2007: 228). As his character gets older, he is 'able to combine the rich, warm tones and cello-like timbre of his voice with a much higher, more musically ascending key' (ibid). She also alludes to his Northern accent, quoting Barrow (1985: 12, in Smith 2007: 229): 'a voice made more beautiful in timbre by the trace of a Northern quality it never quite lost'. She also comments on Bing Crosby's voice in *Going My Way* (Leo McCarey 1944), in which Crosby plays Father Chuck O'Malley, an Irish priest. In one scene, he sings a lullaby to an older priest, 'introducing a slightly wavering quality into some of his higher-note renditions of certain words and syllables' (Smith 2007: 233). This is known as 'upper mordent' and is Crosby's 'signature vocal technique' (Giddins 2001: 11 in Smith 2007: 233):

This technique is a well-recognized hallmark of Crosby's singing style and one that, in revealing something of this singer's Irish immigrant roots, finds what is surely one of its most lyrically apposite and poignant expression here (ibid).

Smith's descriptions highlight the significance of accent in these actors' vocal deliveries, while these references to accents (Scottish and Irish) and inflection of pitch bring about issues of characterization in the original film and its translated versions, as these are parameters that will inevitably change.

Finally, it must be noted that Smith's technique is to draw consistent parallels between the action (e.g. suspense, romance), the use of voice (or style of delivery) and the actors' gestures and positions on the screen, e.g. the unsteadiness of James Stewart's voice being matched with, respectively, his shaking hands and Greer Garson's voice:

The exact staging of this part of the closing sequence is especially important in understanding the regenerative force with which Garson's voice becomes endowed at this point. For while we as audience are now privileged with a shot showing her arriving at the gate and calling out 'Smithy?', the cut to a shot showing Colman standing at the doorway of the cottage with his back to Garson, then turning around on hearing her refer to him by his former name, makes clear the ability of this moment to re-enact the earlier nature of their first encounter, as he once again becomes aware of her in the form of a voice whose bodily source lies somewhere outside his frame of vision (2007: 223).

Or consider her discussion of the burgeoning relationship between Greer Garson and Robert Donat in *Goodbye, Mr Chips* (Sam Wood 1939): 'As Chipping becomes more pensive again, the film shifts to a closer shot of the pair as Donat exclaims with a deepening ache to his voice: "It must be the altitude!"' (2007: 227). Likewise, as Donat, a retired headmaster dying, is lying in bed:

The last word of this final line² is stretched out masterfully by Donat in the form of a slow, contented sight that testifies, even at the moment of death, to the lasting effect of Garson's vocal rhythms on this character (2007: 229-230).

Once again, we are reminded that the various elements of *mise-en-scène* combine to generate meaning and that they should not be considered in isolation but as part of the whole.

Finally, something interesting occurs when we combine 'vocal release' and what Klevan calls a 'moment of significance' (2005: 61). Analysing *There's Always Tomorrow* (Douglas Sirk 1956), Klevan describes a brief moment between Barbara Stanwick (Norma Miller) and Fred MacMurray (Clifford Groves), during which she removes Clifford's apron:

[A] gesture of handing out becomes one of reaching out; and her deftness at removing the apron only identifies the gesture of yearning. A swift moment of affinity quickly becomes one of distance. We know nothing of their past at this moment, and for its length the film discloses little concrete information (no flashbacks, for example). The film does not provide a direct presentation, or explanation, of a past that is too potent and too indistinct. The performers provide more indirect, yet appropriate ways of communicating their characters' past. Stanwick economically expresses a life's regrets in the gesture [...] Clifford's move away from Norma has a similar effect to Marion's moves away from him: as Clifford and Norma realise a moment of significance it is already moving away from them.

Moments of vocal release therefore work together with moments of significance, wherein voice and gesture seamlessly combine to generate meaning. Moreover, one can see that a short visual moment needs to be described at length in order to capture its full fictional charge. It is for this reason that short scenes will be described in great detail in my own analysis (*Chapter Six*).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that voice is a defining element of identity and an integral part of performance and characterization. By considering material from Film Studies, it has become obvious that voice is an important parameter of performance analysis. Dolar explains that voice 'is not part of linguistics' and that 'it is not part of the body either' (2006: 72-3). In other words, a voice 'floats [...] at the intersection of language and the body' (ibid. 73) and acts as 'the link which ties the signifier to the body' (ibid.: 59), 'hold[ing] bodies and language together' (ibid.: 60). For Dolar, voice is what bodies and languages have in common; it is their missing link. However, 'if there is no voice without a body' (ibid.), where does this leave us

² His final line: 'But you're wrong. I have. Thousands of them. Thousands of them. And all the boys...' is in answer to a comment that it is a pity he did not have children.

when we perform dubbing?

This is why voice will be a major component of my analysis of original and dubbed products. The works reviewed in this chapter have also shown that, when studying performance in audiovisual texts, we engage with the material in terms of 'experience', i.e. in terms of our relationship to both actors and characters. It is through performance that an audience experiences characters' point of view, their inner states, thoughts and emotions, and thus gets an impression of who they are. This impression is conveyed through camera movements and both facial and physical gestures, all of which generally remain intact in translation. However, what cannot remain intact in dubbing is the quality of voices and the relationship between the parameters of performance discussed so far. What I argue in this book is that the way characters are experienced depends on, or is informed by, the way actors perform these characters. I consider performance to have an interpersonal function, and my multimodal model will attend to various modalities related to (actors') performance. Before introducing this model, I shall first examine the dubbing process and discuss its possible effect and impact on performance and characterization.